

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Previously Presented) A mass production method for manufacturing successive spherical glass articles, in each of which is accommodated a three-dimensional object or figurine, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a container with a mass of molten glass, the container including a discharge opening through which liquid glass can be delivered;

(b) providing a plurality of thermally resistant figurines; and

(c) repeating the following steps (d)-(h) for successively enclosing a figurine in glass;

(d) dividing the liquid glass delivered via the discharge opening into successive portions;

(e) guiding the portions into a mold;

(f) wholly enclosing at least one figurine on or at least partially in the portion of glass guided into the mold, thereby forming a glass mass with the at least one figurine enclosed therein;

(g) removing the formed glass mass from the mold; and

(h) modeling the mass to a spherical form by omnidirectional rolling for a time, together with simultaneous cooling, such that the mass solidifies and forms the spherical article.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the figurines are preheated.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising the steps of:

providing a mold with a substantially hemispherical bottom, and a substantially hemispherical cover for placing on and removing therefrom;

pouring a first portion of glass onto the bottom;  
placing the cover thereon and pressing the enclosed portion of glass; and  
removing the cover.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of concave rollers, together which bound a round passage opening.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein the rollers include partially spherical cavities for co-acting in register positions during rotation.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of pouring a second portion of glass onto the first portion of glass and the figurine.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein cooling of the spherical article takes place by progressing the article through a temperature path from an annealing temperature to a strain temperature, such that cooling occurs in a substantially stress-free manner.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 54, further comprising the steps of:

additionally annealing the article by fully heating the form to remove internal stresses; and

subsequently and slowly cooling the article.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, wherein the article is slowly cooled to about 50°C.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising the division step (d) is performed by cutting through the glass flow between two figurines.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein the cutting occurs by use of two plates having co-acting, generally concave and substantially V-shaped cutting edges.

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59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the modeling step (h) is performed by a first roller having a recessed helical groove with a smooth, round form, wherein the roller is rotatable at a first peripheral speed and co-acts with a second roller rotatable at a second peripheral speed differing from the first peripheral speed, wherein the second roller is smooth, provided with a helical groove, or any combination thereof.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, in step (e), the portions are guided continuously into the mold.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein, in steps (d)-(h), the portions are guided into a mold, which comprises one of a plurality of molds for successively holding successive glass portions therein.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 61, wherein steps (d) and (e) are repeated for a plurality of molds prior to steps (f)-(h).

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein in step (e), the method further comprises the step of delivering the portion of glass from two sides to the mold to thereby enclose the at least one figurine therein.

64.-71. (Cancelled)